YANKS TAKEN IN BOCHE SEICHEPREY ATTACK RETURNING

Black Bread Mixed With Sawdust and Acorn Coffee Their Food

MISTREATMENT FOR SOME

See Revolt Start When German Marines Beat Officers and Throw Several in Rhine

Seicheprey prisoners, after seven months in German hands, are returning home.

These Americans, members of the 102nd and 104th Infantry Regiments, 26th Division, captured in the course of the famous attack in the Toul sector on the mornings of April 12 and 20, 1918, tell different stories of their treatment.

Among the first five to be released, two declare they were beaten several times and that they were half starved Other Americans held at the same place, Mühlheim, suffered like treatment, they assert.

The other three, who were fortunate enough to be employed at the Red Cross Post at Limburg, had no tales of personal brutality to tell, but declare that the other Allies, as well as the Russians, were handled viciously.

Privates Charles Monson and Richard Brightman, of the 102nd, and Patrick F. Meehan, of the 104th, were the men who worked at the Red Cross Post. Privates James Goldrick and Leonard Colburn, of the 102nd, were put to work in a wire factory at Mühlheim. They said the 187 or so men captured at Seicheprey were scattered all over western Germany.

Attack by Trained Troops

The Germans, 15 companies of them, that attacked at Seicheprey were specially trained shock troops. They had no rifles or bayonets, said Monson, depending on revolvers, hand grenades, knives and some kind of electrical bombs. It was the first attack in force against a point of the line held by American troops.

In the Yankee's own trenches the Germans stripped their prisoners of boots, shoes and overcoats, handling roughly all those who resisted, and in one case shooting dead an American who was slow in obeying orders.

From Seicheprey the captives were forced, wounded included, to walk in their stocking feet to Thiaucourt, where they were herded into a church and the wounded given first aid treatment. From Thiaucourt they were taken by train to Conflans. Here the separation process started, the officers there were five or six—going to the officers' camp, the men themselves being split up in small groups and distributed over various interment cities.

Mapy, including the five named, were sent to Darmstadt, where they were inoculated. From here Monson, Meehand and Brightman were sent to Limburg, while Goldrick and Colburn went to Mühlheim.

"The Pumping Station"

Conflans was called by the Americans "the pumping-station," because it was here that the German officers spent days in an effort to extract military information. Each man would have something different to impart, so that, at the end of the day, when the officers compared notes, they were in despair over the diverse answers.

"Why, damn it," exclaimed one German officer to Monson, after several hours of close questioning, "we know more about the American Army than you do."

"Why ask me, then?" Monson retorted.

The food for the captives comprised the well-known black bread, plentifully mixed with sawdust, soup, and, on Sundays, coffee (made of acorns). Goldrick and Colburn said this menu never varied day in and day out. They worked, if on the day shift, from 7 a.m. to 5:15 p. m., and if on the night shift, from 7 p. m. to 7 a. m. Their captors were not unnecessarily cruel to them, but did not go out of their way to do little favors, either. The Russians were handled worse than dogs, their plight being pitiful, Monson said.

At Limburg it was the duty of Monson, Brightman and Meehan to sort the Red Cross packages intended for Allied prisoners and attend to their proper distribution. The packages first were taken to a huge room, termed by the prisoners "The Chamber of Hororrs," where German non-coms opened them, seeking weapons and other contraband. As cigarettes and soap were worth their weight in gold in Germany, these articles were frequently stolen from the bundles and blocks of wood substituted. There were cases, too, Monson said, in which some prisoners never received packages, their captors refusing to answer the cards of inquiry sent via Switzerland.

Baths Allowed on Saturdays

On Saturdays the men were permitted to bathe, but as there were many prisoners, it was impossible for all to bathe on one day. Many prisoners, too, were covered with sores and vermin, and this made bathing dangerous.

On November 8 or 9, according to Goldrick, several hundred German marines appeared suddenly in Mühlheim, attacked the officers, beat many of them and threw several into the Rhine. They then bade the soldiers there to tear the insignia from their uniforms and become "citizens." It was the first concrete evidence the captives had had of the rumors that there had been a great mutiny at Kiel and other cities, and that a revolution had been proclaimed.

That same day they were marched to the Mühlheim railroad station and sent to Limburg, where thousands of other Allied prisoners had been congregated. From here they were taken to Metz. At Metz many were ridden two kilometers out of town on trains and then told to "heraus." Others, including Brightman, Goldrick and Colburn, walked to Toul.

The failure of the Germans to reach Paris last July sealed Germany's doom, Monson said he was told The stockade was airtight, the potato crop was a failure, and the mighty air raids of the Allies terrified the inhabitants of the Rhine cities. When General Foch began to roll up the Teuton line, it was the beginning of the end.

Meehan reached the border with a big square suitcase filled to bursting with souvenirs and Red Cross gifts. He had everything from a huge Scotch plaid to a piece of "Jerry punk." And, with a broad grin, after crossing the line, he lifted a false bottom from the suitcase, revealing papers, letters, diaries, post cards, propaganda and other flat thin documents that the enemy was not permitting to leave the country.

PVT. PHILIP ROSEN SINGS WAY HOME FROM PRISON CAMP

Yank Runner Owes Life to Captured British Medical Officer

FIVE MONTHS A CAPTIVE

Just the Same He Learned to Talk French Like a Frenchman While in Hun Hands

After five and a half months' imprisonment within the German lines, Private 1st Class Philip Rosen, runner in the Machine Gun Company of the 9th Infantry, is "back in the Army again," having started back on the morning of the armistice of his own accord.

Except for five weeks which he passed in a captured French hospital at St. Gilles in the Laon region, he saw no English-speaking people until, after a 200-kilometer hike across Belgium and France, he reached Hirson, above St. Quentin, on November 18.

During the major part of his captivity he was the lone American in a camp of 1,500 French prisoners. As a consequence, he lapses every now and then into French or German, instead of using the language of his adopted country, for he was born in Austria, near the Hungarian boundary, in the vicinity of Budapest, and went to New York when two years old. He is now 22.

When he arrived in Paris and reported to the A.P.M., few people would have suspected that he was an American soldier. From neck to foot he was, to all intents and purposes, a typical repatriated poilu. A heavy black mustache, grown during his captivity, added to the illusion. On his head was a French railroad worker's hat, given him by a kindly civilian as he made his way across the reconquered country.

Bathed and de—yes, he had 'em, too, and says that all the Germans have them as well—bathed and sulphur ointmented and outfitted all anew in American uniform, Private Rosen told the story of his wanderings. Here it is:

Nursed by British Colonel

On the night of June 5-6, in the vicinity of Château-Thierry, he was employed in carrying messages between his outfit and the post of command to the rear. Somewhere out in a field, he doesn't know where, five machine bullets got him, three through the left side and upper hip, two through the left leg.

He lay there for 24 hours. Evidently the company he was serving moved off, for with light the next day the Germans came over and got him. The next thing he knew he was in the hospital- or, rather, a barrack-like structure adjacent to it- near St. Gilles.

With him were 21 American wounded from the 2nd Division, of which he was a member, all dumped on sodden straw, and devoid of any medical attention from the German authorities or any care from German nurses or orderlies. Had it not been for the capture, at nearly the same time, of three British medical officers, a colonel, a major and a captain, he and the others might not have pulled through at all.

He does not know what happened to the 21 other Yank sufferers. He was too sick to know. All he knows is that the British Colonel, who had to build his own operating room in one end of the quasi-barrack building with hammer, nails and rough boards, extracted the machine gun bullets from his leg and side, healed the wounds up as best he could with the meager hospital stores at his disposal—he could only give out paper bandages every two days—and nursed him back to comparative strength. It is his great regret today that he does not know that colonel's name, for he would like to write and thank him.

"The Americans Have Done This"

As soon as he was well enough to sit up, German officers questioned him. To their surprise, he answered them in perfect German.

"Are you a German-American?" they asked him, menacingly.

"No, I am a Russian-American," he told them, having heard from some of his captors that Russians were being fairly well treated.

In the dialogue that ensued, Rosen's inquisitors were at particular pains to express their contempt for the fighting qualities of the Americans. Later, as he was moved farther back behind the lines, keeping an even pace with Ludendorff's famous retirement "according to plan," he heard quite another tune from his captors. "It is the Americans who have done this," is heard muttered on all sides.

Rosen personally saw only one instance of out-and-out brutality. He heard of many others, doubtless all true, but he will not talk of any incidents of the facts of which he has not first hand evidence. What he does know is that a French soldier, in a party of prisoners which he accompanied on a water detail in Belgium, famished from the meager black bread and substitute coffee diet accorded the prisoners, stepped out of ranks to pull up a raw beet from a field. The guard in charge of the party, standing three or four meters away, fired and shot him in the hand and the leg giving as his excuse later that the man had tried to escape.

Neglect and Short Rations

What he and the Frenchmen with whom he was thrown suffered the most was neglect and short rations. Only once, says Rosen, was he examined by a German medical officer, and then, after a superficial looking over, he was hustled out on the road to a camp further in the rear, at Vorsges: No provision was made for bathing, and at the last camp he was in, at Champ-Boval, near Villers-le-Gambon, Belgium, a three-kilometer hike had to be made to get water for the kitchens, water being the main ingredient of the soup and coffee doled out to the prisoners.

The ration of sour black bread while in the St. Gilles hospital was one small loaf of 500 grammes, supposed to last three days, while the German soldiers drew one loaf for every two days. The bread sufficed to allow the prisoners two small slices in the morning, one at noon with their socalled soup, and two at night. When they were in luck they were able to draw 50 grammes of marmalade a day, and dark and muddy synthetized coffee in the morning.

Sometimes they were granted a meat ration of 100 grammes for a day, but this often turned out to be 80 to 90 per cent bones, good for nothing but soup making.

During the whole of his captivity, Rosen declares that he received no package from the Red Cross through its clearing house committees in Switzerland, designed to care for American prisoners of war. The French prisoners with him were entitled to receive a certain amount of biscuits, but none came through. And not one of the 1,500 got a single piece of mail in all the time they were prisoners.

No provisions were made for their entertainment, nor did any chaplains visit them. Their quarters were examined by no neutral commissions. Every day they were marched out to work at 6 o'clock and kept at digging trenches and constructing munition dumps in the back areas, having to start this heavy work on nothing more than a liter of substitute coffee. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon they were through work and given a meal of watery vegetable soup, sometimes graced with a few morsels of fat or meat. At night they received their bread ration for the day, either 500 grammes of war bread or 250 grammes of biscuit, which they invariably ate on the spot. Work went on seven days a week, with no holidays and for it they were paid 30 pfennig, or 7 cents, a day.

Hiking it for France

Because of his facility at both French and German, Rosen escaped the hard grind of the prisoners' labor, being employed almost exclusively as interpreter. Through this position he was able to keep in fairly close touch with the way the war was going, because of the German and French papers he was able to pick up and read.

It was by reading one of those German papers, the Kolnische Zeitung's army edition, that, on the morning of November 11, he got wind of the proposed armistice and decided that the time had come to cut loose. Without saying by your leave to anyone, he started out in broad daylight a little before noon, streaking along the roads and singing to keep his spirits up. The German sign posts along the road he found extremely valuable, and his own bump of locality enabled him to follow in large part the route he had been taken over on his way into Belgium.

For a week he hiked it every day as long as there was daylight, stopping at Belgian farmhouses to beg a piece of bread or a drink of water, or to ask permission to sleep in a barn overnight. Germans he saw in plenty, but they made no move to stop him. Those with whom he passed a few words, told him they were glad it was all over.

The Cost of a German Smoke

The route that he traveled took in roughly, the towns and villages of Champ Boval, Florence, Sanzeille, Nieuville, Mariembourg Couvin, Peches, Bailu, Maquenoise and Hirson, from which last place he was transported to St. Quentin and then to Compiegne by camion, thanks to a lift from the men of S.S.U. 644. At Compeigne he got a train for Paris, and there, on Tuesday night, November 19, received from the Red Cross his first clean shirt in six months, and was able to bathe for the first time in that period.

"Gee," he said, as he took a long puff at a real American cigarette, "that is a relief. Te Germans used to sell us one cigarette for five cents, or five-seventh of our day's pay. If ye wanted to smoke a cigar—and a German one at that—we had to save up for four days, for the cigars cost 25 cents. At that, you could beat them for two for a nickel in the States."

Father a Rabbi

Rosen's home is at 128 Rivington street, on the East Side of New York. His father is Rabbi Zalel Rosen. He was educated at Townsend Harris High school in New York, leaving at the end of the second year of the course, in 1911, to go to work. Up to the time when, in April, 1917, he of his own free will and accord, held up his right hand and swore to support the United States against all enemies whomsoever, he was a ladies' garment cutter for a clothing firm.

Whether he wants to go back to his old job after he goes home, or whether he would rather do double-duty interpreting between French and Germans—at, however, something more than 30 pfennig a day—he doesn't quite know yet. As for his interpreting, he was kissed and acclaimed as a real Frenchman all the way along his 200 kilometer hike through Belgium and Northern France.

HOW FRITZ DID IT

U. S. Army Official Photograph

HENRY FORD TURNS EDITOR

[By Cable to THE STARS AND STRIPES]

AMERICA, Dec. 5.—Henry Ford has announced that he will turn his automobile interests over to his son and divide his time between his tractor interests and the publication of a national newspaper. He explained:

"I have definite ideas and ideals that I believe practical for the good of all and I intend giving them to the public without having them garbled, distorted and misrepresented."

The new paper will be published from Dearborn, Mich., where he has taken over a small home paper as the basis for his weekly. Several prominent journalists have been engaged as editors.